

Gymea United Football Club Grading Policy

1.0 Introduction

The GUFC Grading Policy has been approved by the GUFC Committee and should be read by all parents, existing players, coaches and new members.

At the beginning of each new season, junior players (Under 9-16) are graded into teams based on ability level. The grading process gives all players the opportunity to demonstrate their talents to unbiased selectors thus giving all players (irrespective of the team they played with in the previous season) a chance to play in the highest division, according to their ability, in the new season.

Young players can change dramatically during a 12 month period. Therefore all players must trial for their position in any side, regardless of the grade they wish to play in.

Care must also be taken to cater for players who are not A-Grade sides. It adds to a player's enjoyment if they are playing with and against players of similar or equal ability. This gives each child the chance to fully participate, enjoy the experience and develop to his/her full potential as a football player. Past experience has shown that it is frustrating for any individual to play in a team in any sport which is clearly above or below their level of ability.

Grading at GUFC endeavours to cater for all players of all abilities. Unfortunately the number of players registered in any age will have a significant influence on the numbers that can be placed in each team as the club is conscious of maximising the time spent on the field for all players throughout the club and providing an opportunity for all those who registered to be placed in an appropriate side.

The club has the care of all players at heart. Grading is a difficult task and people, in some cases, may not agree with the decisions made by the Grading Panel. The club believes that it is an important part of each player's development as a player and person to deal with disappointment as well as enjoying success. Being introduced to a new side presents opportunities for players to make new friends, leading to a positive football experience overall.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

The grading policy is designed to address the needs of both members and the club, some of which might invariably conflict.

The objectives of GUFC grading are to ensure:

- a clear process for the grading of new and existing players is provided each year
- the possibility of bias is minimised by using neutral, experienced grading panellists to assist with the grading process.

- All players have an opportunity to play in a competitive environment, appropriate to their skill and ability.
- Players develop and appreciation and love of the game
- Players learn from their coaches and peers.
- The club can field competitive 1st teams in each age group.
- There is a definite pathway for players to progress within the club from Under 6 to over 45's.
- A club culture defined that takes priority over any individual team culture
- Players, coaches and parents all enjoy the season, have fun and return to the club year after year.

3.0 Playing philosophy

3.1 Small sided football (SSF)

At the SSF level the focus is on fun, participation, social interaction and learning. In the younger age groups a greater emphasis is put on forming social teams where players are grouped together with their friends. Players in the Under 6's and 7's do not grade but rather attend the club's muster to form sides. The club then nominates them for a particular grade with the SSFA.

However as the players become older and abilities become more disparate the club begins to identify those 'standout' players to form A-Grade teams in the Under 8's. The club continues to progressively grade players with similar ability and commitment to training and development from the Under 9's resulting in the formation of different teams each season.

3.2 Junior teams (under 12-16's)

Grading becomes even more important in the higher age groups when competition begins. As players progress through the teenage years, the games become a little more competitive and winning assumes somewhat more of a priority (relative to SSF).

Although the club nominates each side for a respective grade it is the association that makes the final decision on the allocated grade based on that team's previous year's performance and number of sides nominated for that respected age group.

3.3 Under 18's

The club invites all Under 18's who wish to be considered for the Under 18 A Grade side in either the boys or junior womens competition to trial.

All other sides are formed based on players wishing to play with friends. This is line with the club's policy on Open sides. However the club is still responsible for forming the sides and will place players who are not in a side in an appropriate side depending on ability. The club will nominate a grade for each side to the association and the association places the team in an appropriate grade based on either the team's performance the previous year and/or playing history of individual players registered within the side.

4.0 Grading Selection Panel

Head Coach

Responsible for coordination of the grading process

Grading Panel

Assist the Head Coach in assessing players' skill. The Panel are volunteers from within the club with a good knowledge of the game and the skills required in order to differentiate player skill levels. Persons within the club with significant coaching experience are invited to join the grading panel.

To assist in the orderly and fair grading of players the Grading Committee may appoint an **age coordinator** to act as a liaison between the Grading Committee and the age group. The position will be offered to the coach of the highest grade team within the age group. The role is to advise the grading panel during the grading process drawing on their past experience with the age group. The age coordinator is not involved in final selections but rather acts as a support role.

5.0 Grading Process

The grading process begins at the end of the previous season. All coaches are required to complete a confidential team analysis to evaluate the individual skills and abilities of all players within their team. Coaches have the advantage of seeing their players develop throughout the whole season and are able to assess 18 weeks rather than a couple sessions. Coaches also provide valuable information about a player's reliability, work ethic and attitude.

Confidentiality is to be recognised at all times. The assessment of any individual player should not be discussed with anyone else. All completed assessments are to be forwarded to the head coach for use in the grading process the following year. A central spreadsheet is to be compiled of the completed assessments for each age group which is then used at the commencement of the grading process at the start of the following year.

Grading trials will be carried out prior to the commencement of each season on days determined by the Club executive. The grading process shall commence as soon as the

Committee has completed registrations and has to be completed before the Association requires the submission of nominated teams. This is a very narrow window of time and along with field availability, puts considerable restraints on the process. There will be two days assigned (where possible) to each age group, in both the boys and girls. These dates are times are very much dependant on fields and times provided by the Association. The Grading Committee will determine the time allocated to age groups dependant on the number of players registered and participating in the respective age groups. Grading dates and times will be given out during the registration process and published on the Club website.

All players must attend grading to ensure that they are placed in a team consistent with their demonstrated level of skill and ability. Players unable to attend grading but wanting to be placed in a higher division side must make an application in writing to the grading committee to be considered. New players to the club who do not grade or submit an application will be graded into the lowest division and may be provided with an opportunity to be re-graded prior to the season based on performance in trial matches.

At the conclusion of the grading process, the Grading Committee shall meet to review and discuss the formation and allocation of individual players to each team. Where practicable, any members of the grading committee shall not undertake an active role in the grading of their own child. At no stage will GUFC provide a guarantee to any individual player or parent to place children in a team that they believe would be best for their own personal gain or what they perceive may be best. Player and parent expectations may differ with the grading committee and GUFC will not allow discussions between players or parents to discuss an individual player's ability with members of the grading committee.

Should players or parents be unhappy with grading decisions they can go through the GUFC dispute resolution process where a review will occur to consider any parent or player dissatisfaction. Upon confirmation of teams from the selection panel players or parents have 48 hours notice to lodge a complaint should there be any disputes. A written letter addressed to the GUFC Executive Committee is required, which will be reviewed, as per the dispute resolution process, and a response provided within 7 working days. The submission must include a parent/ guardian name, contact phone number, child's name and age group as well as the circumstance or nature of the appeal.

Please note that voluntary de-registrations after the grading results have been announced may forfeit the refund of a portion of registration fees up to \$125.00.

If in the best interests of a player and the club, the GUFC grading panel may make decisions outside of the club grading policy in the forming of sides due to significant extenuating circumstances. These decisions will be at the discretion of the GUFC Executive Committee.

Numbers in each team are determined by dividing the number of players by the optimum number of players per team. GUFC club philosophy is to see maximum time on the field for all players and this is a significant factor in the forming of sides and therefore the individual grading of players.

In SSF teams are formed with one reserve as there are no borrowing rules. In Junior competition sides (Under 12-16) due to clear and defined Association borrowing rules the club endeavours to provide 2-3 reserves per side but this is not always the case as numbers registered may not allow this to happen. Eg 45 players registered would see 3 teams of 15 rather than 4 teams with 3 of these teams having no reserves. In any combination to form teams excess players will be allocated to the lowest graded team as this facilitates borrowing of players within any given age group. Where there are occasions where the numbers make it difficult to allocate the optimum number of players as per the registration policy to each team, players could also be asked to play in different age groups to ensure that every one gets a game. In every case the committee will strive to ensure everyone gets a game.

The GUFC Executive Committee may close registrations for particular age groups on the eve of the final registration day to ensure numbers are optimum and players enquiring about registration could be offered either a position on a waiting list (to see if another team can be formed, especially in SSF), an opportunity to play up an age group, especially if there are numbers needed in the above age group or as a last resort enquiries made at other local clubs in the hope of providing an opportunity for the respective player to play football.

It is imperative that existing and new members register in the time frame published by the club as the grading committee has a very narrow window of time available for grading and due to this time constraint (teams need to be submitted to the association by certain dates and there are significant fines imposed by the association for withdrawing sides) and optimum playing numbers per side and age group registering late can end in possible disappointment for individuals.

6.0 Announcement of teams

The announcement of teams is necessary immediately after the grading process rather than published on the club website as the club may have in excess of 80 junior sides and the difficulty of finding coaches and managers for all these sides makes it impractical to publish sides at a later date.

Once sides are selected the club may appoint a particular coach to the side. Prospective Coaches are encouraged to apply for a position during the registration period by emailing the Head coach with a preferred side. If no coaches have nominated for a particular division then coaches may nominate on the day the side is announced. Managers are also appointed after the grading process is completed.